

What is Claimed is:

1. A method for testing a plurality of mailpieces for a contaminant comprising the steps of:

compressing the plurality of mailpieces, the compression causing matter contained within and on the plurality of mailpieces to become airborne into a surrounding environment of the plurality of mailpieces;

collecting a sample from the surrounding environment of the plurality of mailpieces; and

analyzing the sample from the surrounding environment to determine if a contaminant may be present.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of mailpieces are contained in a mailing tray, and the step of compressing further comprises:

moving the mailing tray on a transport device; and

decelerating the mailing tray to cause the compression of the plurality of mailpieces.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the step of decelerating further comprises:

causing the mailing tray to hit a stop member to stop the mailing tray.

4. The method according to claim 3, wherein before the step of causing the mailing tray to hit a stop member the method further comprises:

accelerating the mailing tray on the transport device.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of collecting further comprises:

using a vacuum system to collect the sample.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of analyzing further comprises:

analyzing the sample for an aerosol.

7. The method according to claim 6, wherein if an aerosol is found in the sample, the method further comprises:

diverting the plurality of mailpieces from a normal processing path.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of analyzing further comprises:

analyzing the sample for a specific contaminant.

9. The method according to claim 8, wherein if the specific contaminant is found in the sample, the method further comprises:

diverting the plurality of mailpieces from a normal processing path.

10. The method according to claim 1, wherein if no contaminants are found in the sample, the method further comprises:

sending the plurality of mailpieces to a normal processing path.

11. A method for testing a tray of mail for a contaminant comprising the steps of:

moving the tray of mail along a transport path;

decelerating the tray of mail to compress the mail in the tray, the compression causing matter contained within and on the mail in the tray to become airborne into a surrounding environment of the tray of mail;

collecting a sample from the surrounding environment of the tray of mail;
and

analyzing the sample from the surrounding environment to determine if a contaminant may be present.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein the step of decelerating further comprises:

causing the tray to hit a stop member in the transport path.

13. The method according to claim 12, wherein before the step of causing the tray to hit a stop member the method further comprises:

accelerating movement of the tray along the transport path.

14. The method according to claim 11, wherein the step of collecting further comprises:

using a vacuum system to collect the sample.

15. The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of analyzing further comprises:

analyzing the sample for an aerosol.

16. The method according to claim 15, wherein if an aerosol is found in the sample, the method further comprises:

diverting the tray of mail from a normal processing path.

17. The method according to claim 11, wherein the step of analyzing further comprises:

analyzing the sample for a specific contaminant.

18. The method according to claim 17, wherein if the specific contaminant is found in the sample, the method further comprises:

diverting the tray of mail from a normal processing path.

19. The method according to claim 11, wherein if no contaminants are found in the sample, the method further comprises:

sending the tray of mail to a normal processing path.

20. A system for testing a tray of mailpieces for a contaminant comprising:

a test chamber;

a transport path to transport the tray of mailpieces through the test chamber;

a stop member located along the transport path; and

a detection system to collect and analyze a sample taken from within the test chamber,

wherein the tray of mailpieces is decelerated inside the test chamber by making contact with the stop member, the deceleration causing the mailpieces to compress thereby causing matter contained within and on the mailpieces in the tray to become airborne inside the test chamber, and the detection system collects a sample from inside the test chamber and analyzes the sample to determine if a contaminant may be present in the matter contained within and on the mailpieces.

21. The system according to claim 20, wherein the detection system further comprises:

a detection unit to detect contaminants; and

a vacuum to draw the sample from inside the test chamber to the detection unit.

22. The system according to claim 21, wherein the detection unit analyzes the sample for an aerosol.

23. The system according to claim 21, wherein the detection unit analyzes the sample for a particular contaminant.

24. The system according to claim 20, wherein the transport path accelerates the tray of mailpieces before making contact with the stop member.